

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 01991 220616Z
ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1991

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, IS, JO (AYASH, SALEH SAID ABOU)
SUBJECT: DETENTION AND DEATH

REF: STATE 182601

1. IN ABSENCE OF MAYOR FREIJ, POLOFF SPOKE JUNE 21 WITH MAYOR'S SON WHO GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF CASE OF SALEH SAID ABOU AYASH. SUBSTANCE OF STORY PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED FROM MAYOR HIMSELF BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.

2. MR. AYASH, AN ELDERLY MAN WHO WAS FORMERLY DEPUTY MAYOR OF BETHLEHEM, WAS DETAINED ADMINISTRATIVELY LATE IN 1977. ABOUT THE SAME TIME, HIS SON SAID ALEH ABOU AYASH WAS ALSO DETAINED. AS ADMINISTRATIVE DETAINEES, NO FORMAL TRIAL WAS HELD. WHILE UNDER DETENTION, THE FATHER, WHO HAD A HISTORY OF HEART TROUBLE, SUFFERED HEART ATTACK, WAS TREATED IN HOSPITAL, THEN RETURNED TO PRISON. AT THIS STATE, WEST BANK NOTABLES--INCLUDING BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR--REQUESTED THAT THE FATHER BE RELAEASED IN VIEW OF HIS POOR HEALTH. THESE REQUESTS WERE DENIED. EARLY IN 1978 (FEBRUARY OR MARCH) FATHER SUFFERED SECOND HEART ATTACK AND DIED IN PRISON. SON WAS RELEASED ONE DAY TO ATTEND FUNERAL, THEN RELEASED FOR GOOD A MONTH LATER. HE IS NOW WORKING IN BETHLEHEM.

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3. ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NO FORMAL CHARGES WERE EVER MADE AGAINST FATHER OR SON, THE STORY IN BETHLEHEM IS THAT THEY WERE JAILED FOR HAVING CONTACTED PLO WHILE ABROAD AND HAVING BROUGHT BACK FUNDS TO DISTRIBUTE TO PLO SUPPORTERS. THE MAYOR'S SON TOLD POLOFF HE THOUGH IT MORE LIKELY AYASH HAD CARELESSLY EXAGERRATED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION THE IMPORTANCE

OF CAUSAL CONTACTS WITH MINOR PLO FIGURES ABROAD. HAD HE ACTUALLY BEEN COMMISSIONED BY THE PLO AS A BAG MAN, ISRAELI SECURITY WOULD HAVE HAD THE EVIDENCE TO TRY HIM RATHER THAN MERELY DETAINING HIM ADMINISTRATIVELY, FREIJ REASONED.

4. FREIJ SAID HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY CHARGES THAT THE OLD MAN HAD BEEN PHYSICALLY BEATEN WHILE IN PRISON, ALTHOUGH IT WAS RUMORED THAT HIS SON WAS MISTREATED.
BALL

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